

Livermore school trustees approve more budget cuts

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LIVERMORE — For the second time in two weeks, Livermore school board trustees on Tuesday reluctantly approved a list of deep cuts affecting staffing and programs.

About \$1.29 million in reductions will affect areas such as adult education and library staffing — slashes that district officials say are necessary to offset huge projected shortfalls in state education funding next year.

Tuesday's meeting was the second held with the goal of shrinking the district's approximately \$100 million budget for the 2010-11 school year. Most of the cuts were made earlier this month, when board members approved more than \$7.7 million in reductions affecting teachers, counselors and other job categories. The final chunk of cuts was needed to meet the district's \$8.8 million budget reduction target, officials said.

At a budget workshop Monday, trustees spent more than three hours poring over data, trying to decide which programs to keep and which to eliminate.

A major topic of discussion was the district's popular, decades-old adult education program, which receives both state and federal funding.

Some components of adult education, such as classes in citizenship and English as a Second Language, receive federal money and do not affect the district's general fund, Interim Superintendent Mike Martinez said. Those courses, along with General Equivalency Diploma, or GED, courses and classes that help students make up lost credits, will be spared next year, trustees decided.

Fee-based classes that do not receive federal subsidies, however, such as bird-watching, dog obedience training and other electives offered through the adult program, will be eliminated.

Also on the chopping block next year are more than a fourth of the district's 14 library media specialist positions and about six of the district's 10 or so technology specialists.

In addition to helping keep school libraries current, library media specialists help coordinate the purchase of textbooks and assist teachers. The technology specialists help with Web site maintenance and other duties.

The board also voted to eliminate \$100,000 in high school athletic funding and to cut several vacant jobs, including a truant officer position.

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